

15 Homestead Road
West Simsbury, CT 06092
February 13, 2011

RE: Support of SB 43, SB 90, and HB 5254

Dear Planning and Development Committee:

My name is John Lockwood. I reside at 15 Homestead Road in West Simsbury, CT. I am an avid cyclist, hiker, showshoer, and nature photographer. I am a member of the New England Mountain Biking Association (NEMBA), the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA), and the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). In fact, the LAB recently named Simsbury to their list of Bicycle Friendly Communities, the first town in Connecticut to ever receive this designation.

I am writing to strongly urge the Committee to support the three bills (noted above) that will reinstate municipal liability protection for activities on recreational facilities. Failure to pass such legislation will lead to municipalities and non-profit municipal corporations throughout Connecticut to reexamine their public access policies in light of the Conway v. Wilton court decision, and the recent Superior Court decision involving the Metropolitan District Commission property in West Hartford.

Connecticut is a beautiful, but heavily populated state. While the state is encouraging (and funding) municipalities to acquire open space, it would be senseless not to give the towns some protection from legal liability for the public's use of such land. Municipal lands play an important role in providing recreational activities for the residents of Connecticut.

In addition to supporting these bills, I would urge the Committee to specifically list "bicycling" and "mountain biking" as among the recreational activities to be covered. Through the work of organizations like NEMBA and IMBA, mountain bikers have become active and important stewards of our wilderness trails. These groups have provided thousands of hours of volunteer time in CT to build, maintain and repair trails in an environmentally responsible manner. In addition, these groups provide programs and materials to educate all trail users on how to act responsibly and preserve the open spaces we all use.

Again, I urge the Committee to support these bills. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Very truly yours,

John Lockwood